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November 10, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

In advance of your meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada on November 18th, I write you to emphasize the importance of our country's relationship with Canada to my district in western New York state. Our relationship with Canada has taken a hit over the past few years and my region can only benefit from better ties. As you restart these essential meetings and use them to leverage the impact of the Build Back Better agenda, I urge you to consider these following priorities and to think about how Western New York's future can be enhanced by the actions you will take.

- **Promotion of trade at the US-Canada Border:** Western New York's economic future has and will be increasingly tied to the rapid growth of Southern Ontario. Due to its physical proximity, our region is commonly one of the first markets where Canadian businesses expand. Our supply chains have been integrated for at least a century. Empire State Development's application to the American Rescue Plan's Build Back Better Economic Challenge highlights sectors that could grow, and the many types of jobs that would be promoted in Western New York if we can unlock further integration. I believe that we can promote this integration while also advancing our own domestic economic priorities since Canada shares our values on labor and environmental rights. I urge you to advance these priorities in your meeting.
- **Breaking Down Border Barriers:** Even with the resumption of non-essential travel on November 8th, restrictions to travel at our shared border with Canada are at an all-time high. This has a chilling effect on border communities. Whereas it was once a seamless experience to cross the border for routine activities, now it is viewed as a burden. I urge you to work with the Canadian government to end the PCR test requirement for entry into Canada at our land ports of entry and to work to make the experience of crossing the border better overall. I also request that your Administration use this meeting to begin conversations on how funding provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal will be used to promote efforts to decrease wait times, improve seamless access to travel, and decrease

diesel emissions at Northern Border land ports of entry, as the Government of Canada is a primary partner in those efforts.

Further, I ask that your Administration use this meeting specifically to kickstart conversations with the Canadian government on implementation of Section 22212 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal to improve the efficiency of Amtrak between the U.S. and Canada and establishing pre-clearance agreements so that communities like Niagara Falls and Buffalo can finally realize the potential of cross-border rail travel. This action is long overdue, and with the funding provided, I believe your efforts can help make substantial progress.

- **Oppose the Canadian National Property Tax proposal on American Citizens:** This year, the Government of Canada proposed a one percent national property tax on the value of all foreign-owned vacant or under-used residential properties, effective on January 1, 2022. Under this proposal, all non-Canadian property owners will need to file declarations on the use of their properties or face significant penalties – including American citizens. This would negatively impact many of my constituents who own cottages in Canada, and who have been unable to access them for many months because of pandemic travel restrictions. I believe this proposal, if implemented, would be a blatant violation of USMCA and would break down economic and cultural ties between our two countries. I urge you to ask the Prime Minister to ensure that Americans will not be included in this proposal should the Government of Canada proceed with it.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. I look forward continuing to work with you and your Administration on these important matters to my community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins" with a stylized flourish at the end.

BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress

